THE SECRET HISTORY OF *PANDORA's* BOX.

CONTAINING,

I. *Homer*'s Deſcription of the Cave of the Nymphs explained.
II. The Method that *Jupiter* took to get into the Sanctuary of Pleaſure.
III. The Characteriſtical Parts of the Fair Sex diſplayed, proving that nothing in Nature is more beautiful than they are.
IV. Why the *Propria quæ Fœminis* ought to have been one of the Deities.
V. Why the *Pagans* ought to have worſhipped them.
VI. Why they love Men conſtantly and without Reſerve.
VII. *Zeno*'s Sentiments of the Reſpect due to them, and why he knew his Wife but once.

Dulce eſt decipere in loco. Virgil.

LONDON:
Printed for T. COOPER in *Pater-Noſter-Row.*
MDCCXLII.
(Price One Shilling.)

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

THE dissertation, which I here give the publick, was found among the papers of a learned man of the first order. It is a great pity, that abundance of other works, which he designed for publication, were destroyed by fire about five or six years ago.

MANY original treatiſes there were among them, all maſter-pieces in their kind. Some perſons, who knew the author particularly well, have aſſured me, that they have ſeen the titles of above ſixty diſſertations that he had prepared for the preſs. He had ſtudied in *Germany*, where he acquired that wonderful facility of writing upon all ſorts of ſubjects.

SOME fragments of his works have fallen into our hands. Among others, we have found a diſſertation upon the motive and conſequences of the queen of *Sheba*'s journey to *Jeruſalem*. He undertakes to prove, that this queen, charm'd with the reputation of *Solomon*, who very juſtly paſſed for one of the moſt magnificent and polite princes of his age, entertained a deſire, from a principle

ciple of vanity common enough to the fair-ſex, to make a conqueſt of the monarch's heart. As ſhe knew herſelf richly furniſhed, both with external charms and the beauties of the mind, ſhe flattered herſelf that ſhe could eaſily gain the ſuperiority over all the beauties of his court.

Solomon, according to the author, ſhewed himſelf as conformable as ſhe could wiſh: he diſtinguiſhed her in every manner, and gave her all that preference which ſo ſenſibly touches the fair-ſex: he aſſured her that her dignity was not the object of his reſpect, but that her beauty and wit had engaged all his ſolicitude, and all his tenderneſs.

As *Solomon* was none of your cold ſort of ſuitors, he talked to her

her of actual love, and was heard; he diſcourſed of favours and raptures, and the queen was diſpoſed to grant him all he ſhould ask: but his over-much delicacy in matters of pleaſure, deprived the king of all thoſe ſweet tranſports which he had promiſed himſelf.

Our author pretends to know for certain, and ſays he is able to prove, that her *Sabæan* majeſty had a fiſtula, which ſhe had been afflicted with for a long time. The galant perceived this too ſoon, and a too refined taſte for cleanlineſs made him loſe a pleaſure which he had paſſionately deſired.

This is an anecdote that was never before known. He quotes in the margin ſome *Hebrew* and *Ethiopick* manuſcripts: but as I do not underſtand either of thoſe languages,

guages, I am unable to give my judgment of the ſolidity of his proofs. The firſt leiſure time that I have, I will collect together all of this author's that is eſcaped from the flames, and give it the publick in the beſt condition I am able.

MANY people will ſay, without doubt, that the world can do very well without ſuch works as theſe; and that when a man has genius and learning, it is a ſhame for him not to make a better uſe of them, than thus wildly to give way to his imagination.

THERE is not ſo much in this reflexion as there ſeems to be at firſt ſight: for if, by making a good uſe of one's knowledge, they mean that a man ſhould compoſe no works but what are abſolutely beneficial, books of morality will be

be almoſt the only pieces that can merit ſuch a title.

PHYSICKS, or natural philoſophy, is obliged almoſt continually to run into hypotheſis, and to content itſelf with probabilities. All the other ſciences, in this our day, are ſubordinate to the imagination: it is the age of ſyſtems; we agree in nothing, and the more books there are writ, the leſs do mankind unite in opinion.

THERE are not then, ſtrictly ſpeaking, any other uſeful books, but thoſe that teach us how to live well, and thoſe which treat of the ſciences that are manifeſtly directed to procure real advantages to the human ſpecies. Such are the ſciences that regard anatomy, medicine, botany, &c. For as to hiſtory, criticiſm, ſcholaſtic divinity,

nity, poetry, oratory, and whatever has not a direct tendency to abſolute profit, it ought to be regarded as ſuperfluous, to ſay no worſe of it.

BUT the pedants have taken care, not to give this idea time and opportunity to take root in the minds of men. They look upon every work as neceſſary, that falls in with their own fancies; and pedants there are in all profeſſions.

EVERY one believes that the ſcience to which he is himſelf addicted, is the only uſeful one to the human ſpecies.

A DIVINE thinks he has done his neighbour a very ſingular ſervice, when he has informed him, that after many deep reſearches he has found that *Tobias*, the ſon of *Tobit*,

was not a quack or an empirick, and the deſign of the angels in teaching the uſe that he ought to make of the liver and gall of a certain fiſh, was not by that means to turn him into a conjurer, or to inform him how to make philtre, and taliſmans.

A CRITICK thinks he has very well employed his time and lucubrations, in examining what thoſe ſoldiers did, who were ſhut up in the *Trojan-Horſe*, to ſatisfy all the neceſſities of nature, and not defile their breeches, nor infect their comerades.

YET do all theſe fine productions meet with their partiſans. There are as many different taſtes, as there are countenances: that which inſtructs one perſon, ſeems impertinent to another; and what

will divert a man of this world, would offend and ſcandaliſe a devotée.

THE only good judge, in my opinion, is he that has read works of every kind, and is not prejudiced in favour of any. Our only buſineſs, in looking in a book, is to regard the manner in which the author has treated his ſubject. When a painter has perfectly well ſucceeded in repreſenting a naked *Venus*, I do not ask him why he did not chuſe rather to paint the holy virgin. The painter's choice is none of my province, and I would be very careful how I pronounced, that he who has excelled in giving us a naked beauty, was not able likewiſe to repreſent as well a modeſt figure, covered with a veil.

THE diſſertation that I now publiſh, will not, I imagine, make any great figure in the journals. This is not the intention of the editor; nor was it, he believes, of the author. Your profeſſed ſcholars will not read it: the ſubject is not in their taſte; unleſs their zeal for the antients, whom the author has taken the liberty to criticiſe, ſhould induce them to look it over in wrath; though, in fact, they are under an obligation to protect it.

As to the form of it, for aſmuch as it treats a mere trifle in a dogmatical manner; if the publick receives favourably this little work, I will, as I ſaid, oblige it with all I can get together of this author. It is the intereſt of the fair-ſex to defend him; he maintains their rights, and occaſionaly informs the men

men how they ought to behave towards that beautiful part of the creation.

THE title of the work will not perhaps be thought juſt. Some will ſay it ought to have been entitled *The Apotheoſis of the characteriſtical Parts of the Sex:* but the world is ſo ſtupid at preſent, that the title of a book is ſufficient, ei- to make it read, or to get it rejected.

A PRUDE of a mother will believe at once, that it is a work deſigned to teach her daughters the political uſe that they ought to make of thoſe parts; and a devout matron will perſuade herſelf that ſome myſtical writer has found the ſecret of glorifying theſe parts, and interdicting them all ſenſation. It was

was neceſſary therefore to give it the title it bears.

THOUGH one is not allowed to paſs judgment upon a writer's ſentiments, and his manner of thinking, but only upon his works, without examining what ſingularity there may be in the choice of his ſubject; we may, however, without doing injury to our author's memory, believe that he did not hate the fair-ſex; but it appears by his work, that it was in a taſte that does him honour: he has purified his ſubject from all that might ſeem coarſe in it: he loved with delicacy, and enjoyed, no doubt, with diſcretion and ſpirit.

WHEN a man knows how to make a good uſe of his tender diſpoſitions for the ſex, the commerce of

of women is to him an inexhauſtible ſource, from whence he draws all the virtues of civil life, and whatever may be called *agreeable* in ſociety.

POLITENESS is an appendage of the fair. Woman is the cenſor of manners; ſhe ſoftens the temper and the mind, and beſtows that delicacy and levity which ſcatters ſo many graces upon converſation and writing; and I am apt to think that without this inclination, ſo natural to men, *Ovid*, *Lucretius*, and *Virgil*, had never ſaid any thing very remarkable.

THIS is not the place to prove my opinion; but certain it is, that *Corinna* has made *Ovid* ſay many more pretty things, than the actions of *Cæſar* and *Pompey* could ever draw from *Lucan*

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF *PANDORA's BOX.*

THE *Greeks* and *Romans* were, doubtleſs, of all the people in the world, the moſt ſuperſtitious; every thing, with them, was the object of religious worſhip.

THOSE nations, little ſolicitous of diving into cauſes, formed their judgments only from events: their piety had its riſe from circumſtances, and the good or ill ſucceſs

of affairs either preſented them with, or deprived them of, a divinity.

Wood, ſtone, metals, ſtars, in a word, every object that the univerſe contains, had pretenſions to an *Apotheoſis*, and might with juſtice aſpire to the honour of ſeeing altars erected to it.

The paſſions had the ſame advantage: love, fortune, valour, ſtrength, friendſhip, and hatred, were all deified without diſtinction. If *Veſta* had her temples, *Venus* had her altars; and if the great men had their ſtatues, the famous courtiſans * alſo had theirs.

Ignorance

* Profeſſions change like faſhions. A proſtitute at preſent is an object of ſufficient contempt: but it was otherwiſe formerly. Courtiſans were looked upon with a favourable eye; I mean ſuch of them as, beſides their being handſome and witty, had amaſſed together great riches. I own they ſometimes contributed more to the public good, than the moſt retired devotese. Thoſe of *Athens* and *Rome* often employed their wealth to laudable purpoſes. Indeed the miſtreſſes of kings and great men live in diſtinction enough at preſent, and are at leaſt

IGNORANCE, and the want that men had of certain things, or the hurt that thoſe things might do them, was the rule that determined them in the choice of their divinities.

EVERY private perſon created his domeſtic gods, and diſmiſſed them his ſervice when they did not perform their duty. It is not ſurprizing that, ſince every one had a right to dictate his own ſyſtem of religion, we are ſo much at a loſs for the hiſtory of the worſhip of thoſe nations.

SUPERSTITION did the ſame with thoſe people, that prejudice does every day among us; the multitude now being as little capable to give a reaſon of their faith, as the *Pagans* were of their idolatrous ſyſtem. A father, upon his death-bed, recommended to his ſon the gods that himſelf had choſen; and if the ſon

leaſt in as good reputation as the *Lais's* and the *Phoynes*: but as they make a ſort of diſtinct ſect, the public has little obligation to them, and would not be eaſily brought to erect trophies to their honour.

was ſatisfied with the divinity, he continued to him his penſion.

We ought not to look upon this as extraordinary. Nature exhibits to our eyes a very brilliant proſpect; but at the ſame time that ſhe diſplays her gifts with ſo much magnificence and profuſion, ſhe conceals from our knowledge the principal uſes we ought to make of the goods ſhe beſtows on us. We are very imperfectly acquainted with great part of the things ſhe preſents us with; we are ignorant alſo of the manner in which they were formed, of their qualities, their connexions, their cauſes and effects. With ſuch a rude philoſophy, void of experiments, and dreſſed in probabilities, let us not be ſurpriſed to ſee the antients in uncertainty, to ſee them bow the knee to the elements, and to objects of their own producing.

What elſe could thoſe people have done? May one not maintain, that the ſyſtems of religion which they formed to themſelves, were the only reaſonable ones that could be formed in their ſituation?

The moſt knowing among the *Pagans* did even much worſe: for while they acknowledged

knowledged a divinity, the ſource of all our benefits, they at the ſame time made him the origin of diſorder, and of all the ills that happen in the world. The doctrine of the two principles, revived by *Terebinthus* and *Manes*, was their favourite tenet; and all the world knows the fatal conſequences that flowed from it.

It was natural for theſe people, who were deſtitute of ideas *à priori*, to be guided by rules and reaſonings *à poſteriori*: that is, having no idea of the ſupreme being, nor any true phyſical knowledge, it was natural for them to attribute ſome virtue, ſome property, ſome direction to nature herſelf, and to the objects produced by her.

The weakneſs of human wit appears, more than any where elſe, in the origin of arts and ſciences; they are at the beginning very uncertain, and it is long, very long, before they arrive at the point of perfection.

Neceſsity, the parent of induſtry, is at once the creator of ſcience and of error. Nobody is ignorant that the Hieroglyphicks of the *Egyptians* were the ſource of

of idolatry. The owl, the hawk, the gods *Iſis* and *Oſiris*, all of them ſymbols to explain certain things to the people, or to give them intelligence, became divinities in proceſs of time *. The vulgar, ever groſs in their ſentiments, were ſo much accuſtomed to revolve theſe objects in their minds, that at length they attached an idea of reality and power to things that were deſigned only for their inſtruction. It is well known that the god *Anubis* was nothing but the ſtar called *Canicula*, on which they conferred the name of *Dog* or *Barker*, becauſe, when he appeared; he gave notice, according to obſervations that had been made on his former appearances, of the time when the *Nile* would overflow, and warned both men and beaſts to retire into the high places, till ſuch time as the river returned into its channel.

It was thus that by gradually affixing ideas of power to the ſun and the moon, they proceeded from thoſe general ideas to ſuch as were more particular; which ought the leſs to ſurpriſe us, when we call to mind

* This is what the author of *The Hiſtory of Heaven* has proved with great ſolidity and ſpirit.

mind that we have ſeen in our own days, in an age reſplendent with light and knowledge, men who have attributed occult qualities and virtues to certain things, which reaſon and experience mutually deny them. Read the *Chymiſts*, and they will furniſh you with excellent examples.

NOT long ago the *divining-rod*, or *magical-wand*, made a great noiſe; and had it not been for the cataſtrophe it underwent at the prince of *Condé*'s, its reign, doubtleſs, had been long and glorious *.

THE innumerable train of mock-miracles, thoſe objects of ſuperſtitious worſhip, are they an evidence leſs ſtrong of the folly of mankind? In a time illumined with the moſt ſublime lights of philoſophy, in an age

* *James Aimar* pretended to do ſurpriſing things with his *divining-rod*. So much was continually ſaid of it, that it excited the curioſity of the prince of *Condé*, who ſent for that peaſant to his palace, where the ill-natured ſwitch did not one thing as it ſhould have done, and ſo ruined all its maſter's credit. In *Bayle*'s dictionary, at the article ABARIS, you may find the hiſtory and adventures of the famous *James Aimar*, which are occaſionally introduced, in a very conciſe manner.

age diſengaged from prejudices, if men blindly believe all the ridiculous tales that are told them, need we be ſurpriſed that the poor *Pagans* ſhould adore an ear of corn? There is ſomething more rational and real in this worſhip, than in our credulity.

It is needleſs, I think, to ſay more on this head. All men of ſenſe juſtify the heathens, and require no more at their hands than they were able to grant; and one may believe, with very good reaſon, that they would have been our equals in virtue, if they had been ſo in knowledge; becauſe as to the qualities of the heart and the mind, they were very far from being our inferiors. --- This ſhort preamble I thought neceſſary: but in caſe it ſhould be looked upon as ſuperfluous, I will regard it in that light myſelf, and aſk the reader's pardon for making it.

As I have endeavoured to exculpate the *Greeks* and *Romans*, with reſpect to their idolatry, I think I have equal right and reaſon to paſs my critique upon their religious worſhip, and to blame them for having in it ſo little regularity and diſtinction.

MANY things have been the objects of their homage and veneration, which did not ſo much as deſerve their admiration; and abundance of other things, that were worthy of reſpect and incenſe, have been abſolutely neglected.

I SHALL endeavour to give the reaſon of this capricious humour; or at leaſt to prove, that of all the objects of their religious worſhip, there was not one that ſo much deſerved that honour, as the *characteriſtical parts* of a woman, *(propriæ quæ fœminis)* which the vulgar call, without either reaſon or good manners, the *immodeſt parts.*

THE *Greeks* inherited from the *Egyptians* a great part of their religious worſhip: they adopted ſome of their divinities; and the *Romans* received from the *Greeks* what they had received from the *Egyptians.*

IT appears that the ſun and the moon were the favourite deities, not only of the nations I have mentioned, but even almoſt of all thoſe who had no ſettled ſyſtem of religion. The worſhip which they rendered to theſe luminaries, was founded, without queſtion, upon the viſible advan-

tages which men received from their influences, and upon other qualities, which reſpect, credulity, or gratitude, attributed to them.

It was very natural to regard the ſun as the ſource and mover of light, of heat, of vegetation, and of the viciſſitude of ſeaſons. From theſe ſimple ideas men eaſily paſſed on to ideas that were compound and more comprehenſive. Seeing that he ſhined, and embelliſhed nature, they perſuaded themſelves without difficulty that his preſence was a ſingular favour, and that his removal might, for the ſame reaſon, be looked upon as a ſuſpenſion of this favour.

Doubtless any one may conceive, how theſe people, from one groſs error, fell into another ſtill more ſtupid. From the moſt noble ideas, it is eaſy to deſcend to thoſe of the ſecond rank; and gradually removing farther from an elevated and juſt manner of thinking, one naturally ſinks down to that which is moſt mean and falſe.

Every individual being free in the choice of his gods, and of the worſhip he attributed

attributed to them, it was natural that the divinity, for which a man determined, ſhould be abſolutely agreeable to the ideas that man was poſſeſſed of.

ALL men do not admire the ſame things; nor is there always an unanimity of ſuffrages in the approbation of objects, even thoſe that are the moſt beautiful and perfect. While a *Frenchman* fixes upon *Venus* for his divinity, your *German* will give the golden apple to *Bacchus*, and your *Dutchman* to *Plutus*.

AS we do not all love and reſpect the ſame things, ſo neither do we all equally hate and deſpiſe the ſame objects.

RELIGION, with both the *Greeks* and the *Romans*, was a matter of taſte. It is certain therefore, that the ignorant fellow and the philoſopher, the ſenſual man and the ſtupid one, would not carry their offerings to the ſame altars; and their worſhip, for the ſame reaſon, was as noble and delicate on the one hand, as it was abject and ſordid on the other.

IMAGINATION goes far, when we give up the reins to it. On the riches or indi-

gence of this, depends the beauty or deformity of the productions of the mind; but without judgment and reaſon, which are appointed to conduct it, the moſt lively and brilliant ſallies degenerate into madneſs.

The antients, who excelled in works of wit, and have been, without diſpute, the models upon which the moſt choice ſpirits of our days have formed themſelves, had very little ingenuity in the drawing up of ſyſtems of religion. All the abſurdities that the human mind is productive of, may be ſeen in the choice of the *Pagan* divinities; and their inconſtancy and levity in opinion does little honour to thoſe nations.

Besides the gods that were the property of individuals, every art, every profeſſion, every trade had its deities alſo, who had their particular ranks and functions aſſigned them by mankind. The poets, thoſe fathers of falſhood, did not a little contribute to the nouriſhment of this error; or, to ſpeak more juſtly, they were the men who gave it birth, by ſhewing to the populace the high-road of ſuperſtition.

As it is not my deſign to play the copyiſt or plagiary, I will not enter into a particular detail concerning the quality or number of the *Pagan* divinities. *Macrobius*, at a venture, reckons up thirty thouſand of them: but I believe his calculation is not much to be depended on. This, however, is very certain, that the number of them was ſo prodigious, that whole groups of them were ſent into colonies abroad, when they became troubleſome to the magiſtrate, who was uſually not overdevout.

THERE were gods too for all the orders of men. Thoſe of the great lords had no manner of commerce with thoſe of the inferior gentry and citizens, and much leſs did theſe latter intermeddle with thoſe of the mere vulgar.

IT appears evidently, that no divinity, how powerful ſoever they ſuppoſed him, was ever without a rival. They could none of them engroſs all the homages and little offices of their worſhippers. The men of thoſe days treated their divinities as our petit-maitres deal by the girls who ſing in the opera: whatever they adored,

or whatever they ſuſpected, had altars erected to it.

Valerius Maximus and *Pliny* inform us, that even the diſeaſe *Fever* had her temple.

I AM not much ſurpriſed to ſee theſe people run into idolatry; but the little regularity and conduct that appears in their choice, is what I cannot comprehend. For idolatry does not exclude a ſettled ſyſtem; and it was eaſy to chuſe thoſe objects in nature that were generally eſteemed, and which have the greateſt ſhare in our love and gratitude. They had only to conſult nature, and to make uſe of common-ſenſe.

WHAT is there in the creation more beautiful than woman! and what is more natural than to pay our veneration to the organ that produces reaſonable beings! We men are extremely unjuſt; and I am ſure that if the fair-ſex, who very rarely have the management of affairs, and the inſpection of religious rites and ceremonies, had been poſſeſſed of the legiſlative power, they would have made the object of their ſenſual felicity their ſole divinity.

A THOUSAND good reaſons ought to engage men to chuſe the *propriæ quæ fœminis* for one of their divinities. Thoſe parts being, as I have obſerved, what they moſt paſſionately love, and from which they receive the greateſt good, it is to them they ſhould erect temples and altars.

DOES not nature and reaſon ought to make us ever remember, that theſe parts, with all the charms of pleaſure they contain, have the magnificent advantage of being the depoſitories and organs of propagation, and of the multiplication of the human ſpecies?

WHAT does the ſun, or what is he in compariſon of theſe? He gives us his light, and communicates his heat. What does the earth? She opens her boſom to the diligent labourer, and renders back with profuſion and magnificence, what has been depoſited in her intrails; a ſufficient reaſon, undoubtedly, in the *Pagan* manner of thinking, to make her the object of a particular worſhip.

BUT, without running a parallel, what is it that the parts we are ſpeaking of do not? They

They preſerve the union and harmony of ſociety; they tame the moſt ſavage of men.

The ſoldier, at his return from battle, while yet covered with blood and duſt, and with his mind ſtill full of carnage and horror, forgets, at the aſpect of theſe, the fields of *Mars*. The brutiſh ſailor, at the ſight of them, forgets his ſhipwreck, and ſuppreſſes his blaſphemies. The ſage politician, the intrepid warrior, the grave magiſtrate, the pedant, the courtier, all find ſomething here that amply repays their paſt toils and inquietudes. Here is the ſeat of ſupreme pleaſure, and at the ſame time the ſource of the beauty and perfection of created beings.

Kings and heroes, the inventors of arts and ſciences, in a word, whatever the univerſe contains that contributes the moſt to its beauty and magnificence, are all the gifts, the productions of theſe parts.

In vain would men, to deprive them of all theſe ſhining prerogatives, attempt to ſay, that they are, on the contrary, the fountain of diſorder and irregularity.

If men abuſe their favours, and know not how to enjoy their ſweets, and all the good things they offer us, let us lay the blame on ourſelves: they give us all that is in their power to beſtow; but our acknowledgment never goes ſo far as to make them a full return.

It will be granted, I doubt not, that what I advance here is very true and well founded, and that if the *Pagans*, in the choice of their divinities, had regarded only the utility or pleaſure which the object they deified could procure them, without diſpute their election muſt have naturally fallen upon theſe beneficent objects; that to them the apotheoſis muſt have apparently belonged; that a mode of worſhip muſt infallibly have been allotted them; altars have been erected, prieſts provided and penſioned, and games and feſtivals inſtituted to their honour.

I make no queſtion, but that beſides the reaſon of the thing, which alone was ſufficient to procure theſe parts the rank of divinity, there would have been another great advantage drawn from it, I mean that of the extinction of Polytheiſm.

NOTHING is more certain, than that the greateſt part of mankind would have received theſe divinities with pleaſure, and have ſhewn themſelves bountiful in their libations to them; and I believe the offices of *edile* and *augur* would then have been ſollicited with a great deal of eagerneſs.

IT was eaſy to induce the people to have one principal divinity; and then, by little and little, the ſubaltern deities would have loſt their credit.

THERE is nothing in nature, that was more likely to become the object of a voluntary idolatry; becauſe, over-and-above a certain propenſity that engages us to love theſe organs, there are a thouſand good and ſubſtantial reaſons, which, by proving their utility, and the noble purpoſes they are deſtined to, furniſh us with arguments in favour of their deification.

Cicero ſays, in his treatiſe of the *nature of the gods*, that the gods of *Epicurus* did neither good nor harm, but reſided indolently in heaven, with their arms a-croſs, and never intermeddled with any thing that paſſed upon earth.

THE

THE divinities which I recommend are of a very different ſpecies: it is much againſt their will when they are long inactive, and ſcarce a day paſſes in which they do not ſome good-natur'd action.

IN imitation of *Jupiter*, they dart their thunder only at the raſh, and never do any hurt but when they have been offended. Beneficent and generous in the main, they are ready to yield relief in diſtreſs, and ever diſpoſed to return much more than is given them. Their boſom is open to our neceſſities, and the moſt lively pleaſure accompanies all their benefactions.

THE fair-ſex, who are generally accuſed of running into the exceſs of ſelf-love, ſeem to me entirely juſtified by the conduct of men towards them. Deification was their undoubted right: they, as well as the men, had many good reaſons to alledge on this head.

MANY women have carried the virtues to the very higheſt degree; in which they are much more to be admired than men, as their education, for the generality, pre-

ſents them with nothing that is grand and ſublime *.

MODESTY, which is natural to them all, is queſtionleſs the cauſe, that we do not ſee them, in imitation of the men, form to themſelves a divinity in the taſte of *Priapus*. And I believe I may venture to aſſert, that if they had given themſelves an equivalent, in all the ceremonies †, they would

* *Montaigne* cries out loudly againſt the manner of educating the ſex. "We enure them, "ſays he, from their infancy, to the ſoft buſi- "neſs of love. Their dreſs, their behaviour, "their knowledge, their ſpeech, all their in- "ſtruction tends only to this end. Their go- "verneſſes impreſs no other image on them "but the countenance of love; as if they did it "with no other view, but to give them a diſ- "taſte for it." See *Montaigne*'s Eſſays, VOL. III.

† What proves my conjecture to be well founded, is that we read that in the *Bacchanalia*, the women, without queſtion from a principle of politeneſs, carried the figure of the genital parts of a man, ſometimes tied about their neck, at other times faſtened to their head-dreſs; and, when they became widows, they

would have exploded this god, who was driven from *Lampſacus*, for being poſſeſſed of talents, which are not, in the age we live, expoſed to correction and puniſhment.

But let us ſee if there are not ſome reaſons to be given for the ſtrange conduct, which the men have been guilty of in this point, with regard to the fair-ſex. I have found many, one of the chief of which is jealouſy, a paſſion the moſt likely of any to deprive us of every juſt and grateful idea.

Man, who, I know not for what reaſon, has at all times arrogated to himſelf the preheminence and authority over woman, has invented a thouſand pretences to juſtify his right. That of his being the ſtrongeſt, it muſt be owned, was not the worſt; nor has he been deficient in the uſe of it. His pride has become a party in the affair, and has hindered him from entering into any diſcuſſion upon the right

they concealed it under the latter. The men have never been ſo polite as to make the women a ſimilar return in their games and feſtivals.

right which the ſex had to claim the deifi-cation of their parts.

"WHAT! might the man ſay, woman is to be ſubject to me, and ſhall I be ſuch a *dupe* as to make my divinity of a thing that takes a pride in bringing us down, after ſhe has raiſed us? Shall I addreſs prayers and vows to divinities, who will either grant nothing; or, when they become propitious, require an acknowledgment ſtrained beyond our ſtrength? Shall I offer ſacrifices, and make libations in honour of a divinity, which ſometimes will not deign ſo much as to ſtir for me, (if I may uſe that manner of ſpeaking) nor teſtify, by the leaſt ſignal, that my oblations have been agreeable to it?

SHALL I come and preſent myſelf at the door of their temple, with a heart full of ardor and ſtrong deſires; and ſhall they then treat me with a regulation, which ordains feaſts and faſts, as if I worſhipped the moſt malignant of the ſtars?

SOMETIMES *Juno*, under the name of *Fluonia* or *Lucina*, will repulſe me at the entrance of the ſanctuary. No; there are a thouſand good reaſons to hinder me for-

ever

ever from conſecrating a worſhip to them. Beſides, without their being deified, they have uſurped a power which is already too great, and in courſe of time is like to grow unlimited."

But is it not better to ſay nothing in one's own juſtification, than to defend one's ſelf with ſuch poor reaſons?

Did not wood and ſtone depend yet more abſolutely on the will of man? and was it more reaſonable to pay religious homage to inanimate beings, formed with human hands, and from which there was nothing to hope or fear?

It cannot be diſputed that the *Pagans* would have acted in a truly rational manner, if, inſtead of admitting divinities without number, they had ſuppoſed one ſole and only author, creator, and preſerver of the univerſe.

Common-sense leads us to this idea; and a man can no ſooner conclude, in the way of reaſoning, that two and two make four, but he may prove to himſelf, that the world muſt be the work of a ſingle operator,

operator, without which every idea of order and harmony is at an end.

BUT, when Polytheiſm is once admitted, when the power and functions of the divinity are ſeparated, and when all the productions of nature become the objects of worſhip, I maintain, that every argument which excludes the *partes propriæ quæ fœminis*, is moſt abſurd and inſupportable.

FOR, have not the gods of the firſt rank, with whom ſo much clatter is made, have they not bowed the knee an hundred times before the altars of the fair-ſex?

HAS not *Jupiter* aſſumed all ſorts of forms, to introduce himſelf into the ſanctuary of pleaſure? and has not this change of paradiſe always been very much to his taſte?

NATURE, who ſpeaks to the moſt ignorant of mankind as well as to genius's of the firſt rank, explains herſelf to all in the ſame manner, and much about the ſame time, with regard to the fair-ſex; and it is acting directly againſt light and knowledge, if we refuſe to render homage to theſe

theſe parts, and regard them as ſomewhat very venerable, and at the ſame time very amiable.

Zeno appears to have been abſolutely of opinion, that theſe parts ought to have the utmoſt reſpect ſhewn them, according to the relation of *Diogenes Laertius* *.

THIS philoſopher was ſo afraid of growing too familiar with them, by approaching them often, that he knew his wife but once in his whole life, for that very reaſon; and if a conjecture might be admitted here, I ſhould be very much inclined to believe that *Homer* thought in the ſame manner; which is indeed eaſy to prove, if the ſentiment of *La Mothe le Vayer* be allowed of. That author is fully perſuaded, that the deſcription which our poet makes of the cave of the nymphs, was nothing but an allegory of the *partes propriæ quæ fœminis*. The paſſage is in the third Book of the *Odyſſey*; and as the eleven *Greek* verſes, which contain this deſcription, have been tranſlated into *Latin*, I will inſert them here in that language, for the benefit of the reader.

* Vid. *Laert. vit. Zenonis*, lib. iii. ſegm. 13.

Satramis diffusa in portus vertice Oliva,

Quam propter jucundum antrum obscurumque recedit,

Sacra domus Nymphis, quæ Naiades indigitantur :

Intus crateres, patulæque ex marmore vivo

Amphoræ, apes dulci qua ponunt mella susurro.

Saxea sunt intus quoque stamina longa, ubi Nymphæ

Purpureas texunt telas, mirabile visu,

Intus purpurei latices ; sed janua duplex :

Hæc Boream spectans homines admittit ; at illa

Respiciens antrum divinior, invia prorsus

Est homini, præbetque viam immortalibus unis.

La Mothe le Vayer pretends, that besides the literal and historial sense of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, those poems contain a mystical and moral meaning ; and he will have it, that it is in the last of these senses we

we ought to take the verſes which the poet has given us on this cave.

Mr. *Petit* * has made a terrible outcry againſt this explication, in his treatiſe of the *ſibyl* †; though, in my opinion, he fortifies the ſentiment of *le Vayer*, by reducing, as he does, all the ſibyls to a ſingle one, becauſe it is certain that authors have not been agreed concerning their number.

THE ten ſibyls of *Varro*, and the fourteen of *Suidas*, are reduced to four in *Ælian*, to three in *Solinus* and *Auſonius*, and to two in *Matrianus Capella*.

BESIDES, the verſes expreſs perfectly well the ſtructure of the characteriſtcal nature of women.

* *Pet. Petit. de ſib.* printed at *Lipſick* in 1686, 8°.

† He does not name *La Mothe le Vayer*; but it is very manifeſt, that it is at him, and at the fourth day of his *Hexameron Ruſtique*, that he points. The explication he gives of the *Latin* verſes I have quoted, is very pretty, and vaſtly ingenious.

La Mothe le Vayer explains theſe verſes with a great deal of wit, in the fourth day of his *Hexameron Ruſtique*, to which I refer the reader.

All the world knows, what great reſpect men had for the ſibyl's cave; and doubtleſs this was the reaſon that induced *Homer* to chuſe this allegory, as very noble and beautiful, and altogether proper to deſcribe the parts of the ſex: and if, as I have ſaid, ſuppoſition may have place here, one may boldly conclude, that the poet's view was to inſinuate the admiration and reſpect which is due to thoſe parts.

But it is to no purpoſe to run into hypotheſis: for, whether in fact *Homer* and *Zeno* regarded theſe parts with a great deal of reſpect, or looked upon them with the utmoſt contempt, is a matter of very little conſequence, and from which no weighty concluſion could be drawn: but the example of all the world, the univerſal manner of thinking, ought to be, and is, the foundation of my ſyſtem.

There is none of all the paſſions more violent than that of love; and it was neceſſary

ceſſary that this paſſion ſhould be ſtrong and lively, as it was to be of the greateſt uſe to the human ſpecies.

NATURE ſcarcely waits till the age of puberty, before ſhe lets us feel ſome of its ſtings. Among the ſavages, as well as the moſt polite nations, *Cupid* exerciſes his dominion.

ALL men, almoſt without exception, have a ſtrong propenſity to render to the fair-ſex, and to that part which diſtinguiſhes it from ours, an homage of the moſt affecting and pathetic ſort, with which neither fear nor policy has for the generality any thing to do.

THERE are indeed but very few who do not love the ſex; and we uſually ſee that this ſmall number, who deviate from the road of nature, conſiſt of fellows without ſouls, without any tender ſentiments, and incapable of thinking with delicacy. And it may be obſerved of theſe anti-feminine ſects, which have in different ages been formed, that they have ſubſiſted but a very little while.

THE

THE reign of the *Abelians* * was of ſhort duration; *Origen* † made few diſciples; and *Combabus* ‖ has not found many imitators, in the article of fidelity to his maſter.

WE

* The *Abelians* were a ſect eſtabliſhed in the neighbourhood of *Hippo*, which was extinct before the time of St. *Auguſtine*. Theſe *Hereticks* took a wife for a companion only, and to do their houſhold buſineſs; making a vow to lie with her without knowing or touching her. They adopted other mens children. *Vid. Bayle's Dict.* at the article ABELIANS.

† *Origen*, through an exceſs of devotion, very deſtructive to the human ſpecies, maimed and made himſelf an *eunuch* for the kingdom of heaven. Few divines, I believe, would care to take certain texts of ſcripture ſo very literally.

‖ *Combabus*, a young *Syrian* nobleman, being to take a long journey with queen *Stratonice*, that he might neither be tempted, nor ſuſpected of interfering with the king's right, cut off and ſealed up in a box the certificate of his continence, and gave it to the king to keep. This is a wonderful ſtory: but few young men, I believe, would travel with great ladies, if modern politeneſs required ſuch a ceremony as this.

We naturally reſpect that which we love: therefore more ought to have been done by us, in favour of theſe parts, than has yet appeared. But jealouſy, as I but juſt now obſerved, is, I am afraid, the ſource of all this diſorder.

These parts enjoy many advantages, which our nature is deprived of. Ours is but the very humble ſervant of theirs; and if both the one and the other were deified, in caſe any diſpute ſhould ariſe about rank and precedency, I would ſtrongly recommend it to ours to treat about it in the moſt amicable manner, and not to enter into a cloſe conteſt till the laſt extremity. Our efforts are violent; our attack is rude: but we are very apt to bend and give way, and not return to the charge till after mature deliberation.

This ſuperiority has always afforded a ſubject of envying and quarrels, and man is not generous enough to ſay to himſelf, that it being the deſign of nature to regulate the ſtrength and advantages of each, he ought to do himſelf juſtice, and make a prudent uſe of the knowledge he has of his own weakneſs.

BUT if this reaſon alone was not ſufficient to determine him, the qualities of theſe parts, and the uſe they are deſtined to, ought to prevent his continuing a moment in ſuſpence. They are the immediate ſource of all the wonders that we admire in the univerſe, and on their productions depend the perfection or imperfection of whatever we behold.

THE prince that is ſent to be a ſcourge of the human ſpecies, and he that is created to give happineſs to the world, both equally iſſue forth from this common *nidus*.

IT is in theſe organs of generation, that, together, with the blood, are formed thoſe ſeeds of virtues and vices, which either dignify or degrade human nature. They forge the inſtruments that are doomed to embelliſh, or disfigure the univerſe.

WHAT objects do we know in all the creation, that are capable of producing the like effects? I will venture to ſay, None. But, what more than any thing elſe ought to have engaged the *Pagans* to inſtitute a worſhip to theſe parts, is their very myſterious

rious and incomprehenſible nature: for not the moſt ſkilful anatomy, nor the moſt ſubtile phyſical diſquiſition, has ever been able to give us true and convincing reaſons concerning their operation.

NEITHER the doctrine of atoms, or of ſubtile matter, any more than that of attraction and gravitation, has hitherto been found ſufficient to explain in what manner all this mechaniſm is performed; and the antients were much more ignorant upon this article than ourſelves. Whatever had the air of myſtery, engaged their attention and devotion; but, by an unparallel'd ſort of caprice, all that was moſt truly profound and ſecret paſſed in neglect, and could never obtain an image with religious honours. For as to that figure made of wax and honey, which was carried in the feſtival of the *Theſmophoria*, we are by no means certain that it repreſented the parts we are ſpeaking of; and even if this had been proved, nothing could be concluded from it, becauſe they were the women themſelves who formed that ſimilitude of their own genital organs, and it is well known that they never attached to it any religious idea: it was only the commemoration of

an adventure, which had very much diverted the goddeſs *Ceres* *.

It is pity that the learned *Turnebus* never thought of the ſubject I am now handling: he could have given us very particular proofs of the divinity of theſe parts: for he pretends that the Pagan divinities always diffuſed about them a certain odour, by which they were known; and to prove this he quotes the authority of *Ovid* and *Virgil.* The firſt ſays, ſpeaking of *Flora*,

Omnia finierat: tenues ſucceſſit in auras;

Manſit odor: poſſes ſcire fuiſſe Deam †.

And *Virgil*, ſpeaking of *Venus*, has theſe words:

Dixit, & avertens roſea cervice refulſit,

Ambroſiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere ‖.

And

* See *Bayle*'s Dict. in the article Thesmophoria.

† *Ovid. Faſt.* lib. v. ver. 375.

‖ *Virg. Æneid.* lib. i. ver. 402.

And *Ælian*, in his hiſtory of animals, ſays, that *Juno* having waſhed herſelf in a fountain, the next day after her marriage, communicated a moſt agreeable odour, not to the water only, in which ſhe had bathed, but to all the circumjacent places.

But perhaps the *Pagans* might ſay, what I have often heard advanced by people without taſte, that theſe parts were the true *Pandora*'s box, and that this box was neither more nor leſs than an allegory of the characteriſtical nature of women.

Their notion, very probably, may be true: but allowing it to be ſo, it makes entirely for my opinion; for ſince the parts of the ſex can produce ſo much evil, and do ſo much good; and whereas the *Pagans*, in their choice of things, which they honoured with religious worſhip, had regard ſolely to the good or evil which they ſuppoſed the ſaid things could bring upon them, and to the myſterioufneſs and impenetrability of their natures; nothing can be more evident than that the fair-ſex have good reaſon to complain, and cry out againſt our injuſtice.

THESE parts have, moreover, a very great real advantage, above all the objects that men have deified; and a very ſweet advantage it is for the men, ſuch an one as ought to have excited their grateful acknowledgments.

THE ſun and the earth, which have more than once been honoured with a religious worſhip, beſides their utility, preſent us with a very lovely ſpectacle.

The ſun, in all his different appearances upon our horizon, ſhews himſelf forever in an agreeable manner, and gladdens all nature by his aſpect. His riſing is brilliant, his meridian majeſtick, and his ſetting replete with charms.

THE earth exhibits to our eyes now fruits and now flowers, and with every ſeaſon ſhe changes her phyſiognomy. Theſe objects, without queſtion, beſides the advantage they are of to us, afford our eyes abundance of pleaſure.

BUT is there any man in the world, that enjoys the uſe of all his ſenſes, who does not perceive the prodigious difference there

there is between the pleaſure of ſeeing the ſun and the earth, and that which is given us by the feminine parts, which are at once ſo uſeful and ſo amiable?

In the pleaſures that they procure, every thing ſavours of rapture and enthuſiaſm; and the emotions which they cauſe, are no ways inferior to the agitations and tremblings of the tripod, at the oracle of *Delphos*

It is, in fact, the only perfect pleaſure; becauſe it employs, at one and the ſame time, the parts of the body, and the faculties of the ſoul: and the worſhip that is paid to theſe parts, has a very great advantage with reſpect to conſcience; I mean, that there is no great danger of hypocriſy in the performance of it.

Add to this, that theſe divinities never vary their taſte, but are ever conſtant in their love to men; and whenever they do good, one may be aſſured that they do it without reſerve, that they give with the ſtrongeſt guſt, and never refuſe but much againſt their will.

The

THE gods whom the *Pagans* honoured the moſt, had very little conſtancy in their affections, and a man was never certain that his ſacrifices would be received in good part. Here, quite the contrary, there never falls a drop of incenſe upon the altar, which is not received with benevolence and complaiſance.

WHAT a vaſt deal of difference therefore would men have found, what advantage would they not have reaped, if their blindneſs and ingratitude had not diverted them from the right path of reaſon! What pains had been ſpared, and how many fears baniſhed! Only two divinities might have made the whole object of worſhip: *Jupiter* had been the god of heaven, and the nature of woman the deity of the earth.

THENCEFORWARDS had all jealouſy, all religious controverſy been at an end; and the *Pagan* theology had arrived at perfection. To which we muſt add the advantage that men would have received, from the convenience of this worſhip.

THE *Pagans*, when they offered up their prayers, were obliged to obſerve certain attitudes;

titudes; a cuſtom that ſtill ſubſiſts among ſome of the *Indian* nations.

THE divinities that I preach, more prudent and more intelligent, never exact any ſuch little formalities: they never cavil about the ſituation of the body, and the difference of attitudes. All that they regard is, the zeal and fervor of the worſhipper, and all that they require is an upright intention and perſeverance.

THUS have I proved that theſe parts, on account of their utility, and the noble purpoſes they are deſtined to, deſerve all our homage, and all our veneration; and, for the agreeable manner in which they perform the duties of their function, all our love and all our gratitude.

LET us be ſurpriſed then at the great depravation of taſte, that prevailed among the nations of old: and though the conſtitution of our times will not permit us to deify theſe parts, let us nevertheleſs retain for them all that love and eſteem which is their juſt due: let us cultivate their affection while young; and when, grown feeble with age, our feet will no longer carry us to their temples, let us ſtill ſpeak of them with

with praiſe; let us remember the obligations we have to them. Our acknowledgment cannot but redound to our honour, and will ſometimes refreſh our languid minds with the charming remembrance of thoſe ſacrifices, which we have formerly offered to them with tranſport.

Dulce eſt decipere in loco.

FINIS.

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